**Expansion of Barharva Exchange**

1111. SHRI THOMAS HANSDA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to upgrade and increase in the capacity of the Barharva telephone exchange, located in the tribal area of Bihar, from 200 lines to 500 lines to fulfil the needs of the people of the area and clear the waiting list for telephone connections;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be upgraded/ increased;

(c) whether the Government propose to link the said exchange with STD facility; and

(d) if so, the time by which micro-optical fibres for STD is likely to be installed?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 1997-98.

(c) STD facility is already provided.

(d) 30 Chl. DUHF system is planned to be provided during 1997-98.

**Refusal of Payment by Cheque**

1112. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Telephone Authority at Nagpur have refused to take payments by cheque from the PCO holders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against the responsible officials?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Orders for payment by cash/DO were issued to all the Telecom Circles/Metro Districts. The bills to PCO holders are issued on fortnightly basis and in case of heavy bills on weekly basis. PCO holders are required to deposit security amount/bank guarantee equal to their average one month's revenue. When the payment is made by cheque, it takes considerable time by banks for its clearance and confirming this to Telephone Department. Due to this delay in tallying the clearance of cheques by the banks, the security deposit will require to be increased to safe-guard the revenue of the Department. The increase security deposit will put extra burden on PCO holders. To safeguard their interest, they have been asked to pay the bills by cash/DO.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) above.

*[Translation]*

**Outlived Bridges and Culverts**

1113. SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of bridges and culverts in Madhya Pradesh which outlived their span of life, locationwise; and

(b) the time by which these are likely to be repaired?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Nil.

(b) Does not arise.

*[English]*

**Introduction of Express Train between Alleppey and Mangalore**

1114. SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce any express train from Alleppey to Mangalore;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Passengers of Alleppey have to avail of changeover facilities at Ernakulam/Shoranur for trains to/from Mangalore.

**Gauge Conversion**

1115. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL :
SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :
SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent on gauge conversion during each of the last three years and current year so far, project-wise and zone-wise;

(b) whether the Government have any proposal for gauge conversion through private funding; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.